

How Midway Got Its Name

When the Mormon pioneers came to the valleys of Utah, the master plan for development included the settlement of a string of villages running north and south, from Canada to Mexico. The development to the east and west of Salt Lake Valley was of lesser importance to those earlier colonizers, thereby leaving some of the more choice valleys of the territory to be settled later. (Excuse the bias.)

Beautiful Heber Valley, (originally called Provo Valley) was one of the mountain valleys to be left for later development. It was not until some ten years later, 1858, that the first permanent residents came to this valley. These original immigrants to the "Provo" Valley came from settlements in the Utah Valley, and came to see if they could raise a cattle herd in these lush meadows.

They were soon followed by the first groups of farmers, who settled in the area now encompassed by Heber City. With all due respect, you can't expect them to hit it right the first time, although they were close, very close. It was not until the following year, 1859, that the first settlements began in what was to become known as Midway.

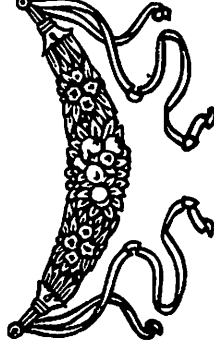
At first, most of the farmers began to develop their farms in an area some two miles north of the present site of Midway's Town Square, to take advantage of the warm ground around the "hot pot" mounds, which helped them get a longer growing season and better crops. In fact, this first settlement was known as Mound City. Another settlement, Cottonwood, was begun to the south of the current town square, and was also known as the lower settlement.

In 1866, Indian troubles began to worry the government leaders in Salt Lake, who advised the people in the two Snake Creek settlements to join together for safety sake. The problem, not considered by the Salt Lake leaders, was which town would move to which town. In this contest of wills, neither side would budge. The logical compromise? Each side move to a site "Midway" between, hence the name of the new town was born.

ECHOES OF YESTERDAY

Summit County Centennial History

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PUBLISHED BY
DAUGHTERS OF UTAH PIONEERS
OF
SUMMIT COUNTY

was crude it was still another step forward in making the new valley more livable.

The time of planting and harvesting in 1861 came and went and the snows of another winter fell on more than 50 families who comprised the Snake River settlements. Then as the summer of 1862 arrived there was sufficient community spirit between the two groups that the first meeting house in the area was constructed. It was built of logs with a dirt roof and floor and was erected in the upper settlement, or Mound City. It was completed in time for the July 24th celebration. As it was nearing completion, the Presiding Bishop of the valley, Joseph S. Murdock of Heber, appointed Sidney Harmon Epperson to be presiding elder of the upper settlement. The lower settlement of more than 20 families was designated as a teacher's district of the upper settlement.

Elder Epperson was sustained in a meeting on June 26, 1862. He chose as his counselors John Fausett and Samuel Thompson. His calling as presiding elder proved him to be a man of faith and courage. He felt the responsibility of leadership and strove for unity among his people.

Side by side he worked with them in grubbing willows and sage brush, breaking land and making irrigation ditches, constructing roads, digging dugways to the canyons for fire wood, blasting rock and bridging streams.

Pioneering for the early Snake Creek settlers was a full-time job, 24 hours every day. However, by 1866 the lives of the people were further complicated with Indian problems. Restless red-men resented the encroachment by white men on their favorite hunting and trapping grounds, and often threatened the security of the new settlers. So, early in 1866 plans were made to abandon the rambling settlements along Snake Creek.

The axiom that there is "strength in numbers" and the wisdom of compromise are probably the two most important factors underlying the establishment of Midway, the thriving community that grew out of the two Snake Creek settlements.

The Indian troubles of 1866 made the settlers and leaders aware that the sprawling Snake Creek settlements would be highly vulnerable to the type of attacks being used by the Indians.

So it was that the upper and lower settlements on Snake Creek were advised to come together as one community. Tradition has it, however, that a warm contest ensued as to which community should join which. Each saw the virtue of their own position and desired not to move. However, a compromise location was chosen half way between the two settlements, and the new site was called, appropriately enough, Midway.

The first step in laying out the new settlement was a survey of the area. With Sidney H. Epperson and John Huber carrying the tapes and Mark Smith and Attewell Wootton Sr., the pegs, the city of Mid-

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